

## **STATE ACTIONS REGARDING LAKE COUNTY DISASTER DECLARATION 2/14/08**

(CENTENNIAL) - Last night, Lake County declared a disaster emergency based upon the threat imposed by elevated ground water in the Lake County Mining District. The Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel became blocked due to a partial tunnel collapse which may have occurred years ago. The blockage is holding back a significant accumulation of potentially contaminated water. Ground seepage from increased snow levels is adding further pressure on the blockage. The tunnel is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation.

The Colorado Division of Emergency Management (CDEM) organized a conference call to try gain insight into the background of the situation, validate the severity and probability of the mine tunnel causing an imminent threat, and to more clearly understand the potential threats to health, life, property, and environment. Fact-finding was the main purpose of this initial call. Agencies present on the call were:

Department of Public Safety  
National Weather Service Pueblo  
Department of Natural Resources - Mine Reclamation  
State Engineer's Office  
Gunnison County Emergency Planning  
Park County Public Health  
Colorado Geological Survey  
Colorado Department of Local Affairs  
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment  
Governor's Office  
FEMA Region VIII  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Environmental Protection Agency  
US Geological Survey  
Lake County Emergency Management  
Lake County Commissioners  
Chaffee County Emergency Management

It was determined that an immediate risk assessment of the situation needed to be completed in a very short timeframe (approximately 7 - 14 days); accountability of Federal, State, and Local responsibilities need to be assigned; and short and long-term mitigation plans need to be developed.

All agreed this problem needs to be addressed immediately and effectively to reduce and/or eliminate any potential threats to the residents, property, and environment. More discussion will take place between all of the stakeholders in the next couple of days, additional conference calls will be scheduled, and actions plans will be set in motion.

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